required equipment and weapon system is carried out as per the AAP and in accordance with the Defence Procurement Procedure (DPP). On the basis of experience gained in its implementation, the DPP-2006 was reviewed and the DPP-2008 came into effect from 1.9.2008. The DPP-2008 has incorporated certain measures to expedite the process of procurement. In addition, the delegation of financial powers to the Service Headquarters for sanctioning capital proposals have been enhanced.

The procedure for procurement of defence equipment under revenue head is already laid down in the Defence Procurement Manual (DPM) 2006.

While contract for procurement of Assault Rifles has been concluded recently, procurement case for Howitzers and Night Vision Devices are in progress.

Return of artifacts seized from Golden Temple during Blue Star

276. SARDAR TARLOCHAN SINGH: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Sikh organizations have approached him for the return of books, old hand written Sikh documents which were taken by Army from Golden Temple during Blue Star;

(b) whether after occupation of Golden Temple complex, Army carried away all the artifacts, books, papers, currency etc. and whether there was any entry made of all these with the Army authorities;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) how long it will take to hand over all the items to Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee (SGPC)?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) to (d) The Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee (SGPC) has approached the Government with similar requests in the past. All books, documents and miscellaneous items recovered from the premises of Golden Temple complex during Operation Blue Star, have been handed over to the SGPC, Amritsar and its functionaries, Curator Museum (Punjab Government), Government Treasurer, Amritsar (Punjab), Department of Cultural Affairs, Chandigarh (Punjab) and CBI, New Delhi. The Army does not possess any of the manuscripts/articles recovered from the Golden temple during Operation Blue Star and the representative of SGPC had also certified that they have no further claim on the Army or the Government.

Recruitments in armed forces from the State of Punjab

277. SHRI VARINDER SINGH BAJWA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of persons recruited from the State of Punjab for Defence Services during the last three years ending on 31st December, 2008 year-wise, force-wise and recruitment centre-wise; and

(b) the steps proposed by Government for such recruitment during 2009?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) and (b) Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

One-rank one-pension for ex-servicemen

278. SHRI RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware of the hunger strike by ex-servicemen at Jantar Mantar, New Delhi; and

(b) if so, what steps Government is taking to address the grievances of over 2.8 million ex-servicemen and their families relating to one-rank one-pension?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI M.M. PALLAM RAJU): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The demand for one rank-one pension stands already examined in detail and was not found acceptable due to administrative, financial and legal reasons. Moreover, the pensionary benefits of the Personnel Below Officer Rank, particularly of the three ranks of Sepoy, Naik and Havildar, were significantly increased w.e.f. 1.1.2006 by increasing weightage from 5 years to 10, 8 and 6 years respectively and by allowing pension of pre 1.1.1996 retirees to be computed with reference to the maximum of the pay-scale introduced w.e.f 01.01.1996. In consultation with Ministry of Finance, the benefits thus accrued to PBOR have been allowed to be retained while revising their pension as per Government decision on the 6th CPC recommendations w.e.f. 1.1.2006. However, the Government is also examining whether certain improvements can be made in the pension being given to the old pensioners.

Shortage of spares

279. SHRI NANDI YELLAIAH: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether 400 odd Bofors guns bought in 1980s are falling apart for want of spares and 600 Shilka anti-aircraft cannons are in desperate need of upgradation;

(b) if so, the factors responsible for it; and

(c) the details of the measures taken to ensure quality and timely equipment supply to armed forces in order to improve defence preparedness?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) and (b) Availability of spares for normal routine repairs and overhaul of Bofors guns is adequate and the equipment is in sound condition.

The Schilka anti-aircraft weapon system is already undergoing upgradation, for which trials have been completed and further technical evaluations are in progress.

(c) The quality and timely supply of equipment to the armed forces is ensured by quality control based on feedback from user units, forecasting of equipment requirements through perspective planning and adhering to the procurement process laid down in the Defence Procurement Procedure.